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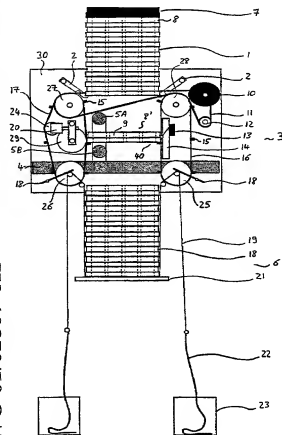
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(54) Title: APPARATUS FOR TRANSPORTING CARRIERS TO A PROCESSING STATION AND METHOD OF OPERATING THE SAME



(57) Abstract: The present application a transporter (100) for transport-
ing specimen carriers (8) to a processing station (40), comprising a first
vertical input magazine (1) of carriers (8), a second vertical output mag-
azine (6) of carriers, and a singulator (3) located between the first and
second magazines (1, 6). The first and second magazines (1, 6) may be
located one above the other. Preferably, the first and second magazines
(1, 6) and the singulator (3) are vertically aligned so that a carrier (8) fol-
lows a straight vertical path. This provides a compact arrangement which
takes up the minimum of floor space in the laboratory. The singulator
(3) receives carriers (8) one-at-a-time from the input magazine (1) and
moves them vertically to a processing position (40). After processing, the
singulator (3) then delivers each carrier to an output location where it is
transferred to the output magazine (6). The singulator (3) may move a
carrier (8) upwards or downwards at an output location (40) inde-
pendent of any movement of the carriers (8) in the input and/or output
magazines (1, 6). The drives for the input and output magazine (1, 6) are
preferably simply gravity drives but the present invention is not limited
thereto. The drive (10) for the singulator is preferably a stepping motor
or DC servo-motor.

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